

# WOODBRIIDGE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS WOODBRIIDGE TRAFFIC AUTHORITY

## REGULAR MEETING

### AMENDED MINUTES

**June 21, 2021**

Via ZOOM Platform (Governor Ned Lamont's Executive Order 7B)

Live Streamed – WGATV, Channel 79

YouTube link: <https://youtu.be/MG-fojxnZH8>

The Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners/Woodbridge Traffic Authority took place Monday, June 21, 2021 at 6:15 p.m., via ZOOM platform.

- *Chairman Berke called the meeting to order at 6:22 p.m.*

#### Commissioners and Liaisons Present-

*Commissioner Andrew Esposito, Jr.*

*Commissioner Deborah Fried*

*Commissioner Stephen Falcigno*

*Commissioner Deborah Desir*

*Chairman Robert Berke*

*Joseph Crisco, Board of Selectmen Liaison*

#### Absent-

*Paul Kuriakose, Board of Finance Liaison*

#### Police Administration Present-

*Chief Frank P. Cappiello*

*Administrative Assistant Janice Innocenzi*

### PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- Mr. Fokides – Motor Vehicle Accident: Woodbridge resident, Mr. Aristotle Fokides, addressed the Board to express his displeasure with the way police officers handled a recent motor vehicle accident in which he was involved. Chairman Berke thanked Mr. Fokides for bringing his concerns to the Board and advised him that there are conflicts like this with car accidents every day in every city in America, some are resolved through discussion and some are resolved through the legal process. It is not the Board's position to second guess the officers' judgment decisions and suggested this may have to be resolved in the court.

### TRAFFIC MATTERS:

- JCC Request to Approve – “10<sup>th</sup> Annual Murray Lender 5K Bagel Run”: Chief Cappiello requested the Board's consideration to approve the JCC's “10<sup>th</sup> Annual Murray Lender 5K Bagel Run” road race on Sunday, September 19, 2021.

***The Board voted unanimously (Fried/Esposito) to approve the “10<sup>th</sup> Annual Murray Lender Bagel Run” road race.***

- Rte. 63/Bradley Road – Safety Enhancements: The Dept. of Transportation has begun their resurfacing project on Amity Road. The majority of the work will be performed at night from 8:00 pm to 5:00 am. Milling began last week and paving is due to start July 6, and weather permitting, the project will be completed by July 20. A DOT Traffic Engineer informed the Chief that over the years, there have been numerous official requests for an overhead traffic signal at the intersection of Rte. 63 and Bradley Road and they repeatedly studied the intersection (2009, 2011, 2016 and 2020). Their review of traffic volume and crash data for the intersection still does not warrant the installation of a traffic light, but in conjunction with the resurfacing project, they plan to make new pavement markings and safety enhancements at the intersection. They plan to stripe a cross-hatch pattern in the northbound lane of Rte. 63, before Bradley Road,

so the two northbound lanes on Amity Road will begin just north of the Bradley Road intersection, rather than south of it. They are also looking into the installation of new advanced intersection warning signs in the area.

- **Sperry Road – Request to Close Unimproved Section:** In April, Chief Cappiello received a request from a Dillon Road resident to keep the unimproved, unpaved portion of Sperry Road closed permanently to vehicular traffic. Customarily, the unimproved section is closed and gated off by the Dept. of Public Works from November through March for the winter months. Last year, due to COVID and problems at the park, we had it closed off early to assist in managing an unusually high influx of trespassing and the health and safety risks associated with that. In 2019, we discussed the same topic of closing the unimproved section permanently at our 12/10/19 Police Commission meeting. At that time, the Sperry Park Commission was not in favor of it, nor was the Regional Water Authority, as both felt it would restrict access to the area for those wishing to use the park and for those granted permits by the RWA to cut wood on their property. The Chief discussed this with the resident, she was invited to and participated in, a meeting with the Traffic Committee on April 12, 2021. Following the meeting, Chris Dickerson (Chair of the Traffic Committee), also rechecked with John Adamovich, (Chair of the Sperry Park Commission), and he is still opposed to closing the road permanently and expressed concerns that elderly residents, who are limited in the distances they can walk, would be restricted from enjoying the property and the park if the road was gated year-round. At a subsequent meeting of the Traffic Committee on May 27, 2021, we discussed it further and coupled with the concerns expressed by the RWA and the Sperry Park Commission, we were all in agreement that the unimproved section should continue to remain open from March through November, as has been the customary practice.

***The Board voted unanimously (Fried/Desir) that they do not agree to close the unimproved section of Sperry Park.***

- **Old Quarry Road/Nettleton Drive – Request for Additional “Stop” Signs:** In March, Chief Cappiello received a request from a resident of Nettleton Drive to install two (2) additional stop signs at the intersection. This is a “T” type intersection that currently has one stop sign on Nettleton Drive with no stop signs on Old Quarry Road. The resident stated that the intersection serves as a bus stop and during the pandemic, there was an increase in pedestrian traffic in the area and he felt that installing two additional stop signs on Old Quarry Road, making it into a 3-way intersection, would help increase safety. The resident was invited to attend a meeting with the Traffic Committee and did so on April 12, during which time we further discussed his concerns. The resident also shared his idea of making it into a 3-way stop with many of his neighbors and following that both Chris Dickerson and I received numerous e-mails both for and against the issue. In April, the Chief ordered a traffic study regarding the feasibility of the request. The findings of the study showed that based on the standards delineated by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices were: Stop signs are not to be used for speed abatement, there was no excessive traffic volume, there was no crash history found for the area and there was ample sightline distance for traffic travelling in all directions. Chief Cappiello shared and discussed these findings with the Traffic Committee at a subsequent meeting and they all agreed that based on the results of the traffic study, the intersection should remain as currently posted and the request for the installation of additional stop signs be denied at this time.

***The Board voted unanimously (Esposito/Fried) to deny the request for additional stop signs.***

- **Rte. 243/Milhaven Road – Request for “Children Crossing” Signs:** Last month, the First Selectman forwarded a letter she received from three young children who reside on Tumblebrook Road, who are requesting the installation of a “Slow, Children Crossing” sign on Rte. 243 (Ansonia Road) near the Milhaven Road intersection. Old Barnabus is a commonly used shortcut access to Beecher Road School via bicycle and on foot. There were no accidents or incidents that preceded the request, but just like at the high school, there are a lot more people using alternative means to access all the schools. The complication is that road falls under the CT DOT jurisdiction as it is a state highway, not a town-owned and maintained road. This type of sign is no longer approved by the Federal Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. Chief Cappiello reached out to the CT Training and Technical Assistance Center at UConn for some guidance on how best to proceed and it was suggested that the Chief write a letter to the State Dept. of Transportation, explaining the children’s request and seeking their approval for some type of a pedestrian warning sign or other solution that

they may deem appropriate. The Chief will send the letter and will follow up with the children, their parents, and the Board as to the DOT's stance on the matter.

- 110-125 Bradley Road – Request for “Curve” Signs: Chief Cappiello reported that earlier this month, he and the Public Works Director received a request from the owner of West Rock Materials/Advanced Paving concerning a sightline safety issue in the area of 110-125 Bradley Road. There is a sharp, blind curve in that area of Bradley Road, where there are several businesses in the area, including the Animal Control facility, construction companies and a tennis club. We conducted a traffic survey of that area for the Town in conjunction with the Animal Control facility in 2017 due to the increased traffic flow and at that point, we had new line painting done and speed limit signs installed. The current issue is that the property owner of 110 Bradley Road (Tennis Center) planted numerous pine trees along the entire radius of the curve which hinders the sightline. These trees have now grown to the point where they have blocked the entire view around the curve so that oncoming traffic has no visibility and cannot see what is in the road as they are approaching. The concern is heightened by the large construction equipment that frequents the area. Chief Cappiello has discussed the concerns with Warren Connors from DPW and he is addressing the line of sight/tree trimming/removal issue with the property owner. Chief Cappiello is also recommending that “Curve Ahead” traffic signs be installed on the approach in both directions to further enhance awareness in the area.

***The Board voted unanimously (Esposito/Fried) to install the curve signs.***

- Hidden Driveway – 2 Bethmour Road: A resident at 2 Bethmour Road reached out to the First Selectman's office regarding a safety issue. Their driveway is on a curve, midway between Rte. 67 and the short distance to the bridge at the Bethany town line. Their concern is that because their driveway is hidden on the curve, they have had several close calls due to increased traffic over the years and approaching cars are unaware of the driveway. She has had some near collisions and is requesting a “Hidden Driveway” type sign in the area. After performing a site survey of the area, I confirmed that there is not much distance in either direction for cars passing by to react. My recommendation would be that we concur with the request and authorize the installation of a “Hidden Driveway” advisory type sign there.

***The Board voted unanimously (Fried/Esposito) to approve the installation of a “Hidden Driveway” sign at 2 Bethmour Road.***

**ADJOURNMENT:**

***The Board voted unanimously (Fried/Desir) to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Traffic Authority at 6:51 p.m. and move directly into the Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners.***

Respectfully submitted:  
Janice Innocenzi, Administrative Assistant

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*Joseph Crisco, Board of Selectmen Liaison*

#### Absent-

*Paul Kuriakose, Board of Finance Liaison*

#### Police Administration Present-

*Chief Frank P. Cappiello*

*Administrative Assistant Janice Innocenzi*

#### **APPROVAL of MINUTES:**

- B.O.P.C. Special Meeting – May 4, 2021:

*The Board voted unanimously (Fried/Esposito) to approve the minutes from the Special Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners/Woodbridge Traffic Authority held on May 4, 2021.*

- Chairman Berke modified the agenda to move **Public Comments** to the end of the meeting.

#### **REVIEW of REPORTS:**

- **Financial Report:** Chief Cappiello reported that as we are nearing the end of Fiscal Year 2021, as of last week we are at 90% and we remain on track with just a short time to go, and we believe we will come in within budget.

*The Board voted unanimously (Fried/Falcigno) to accept the Financial Report.*

- **Criminal Activity Report:**

- **Homicide Investigation:** We are investigating a homicide after a body was found on the morning of June 8<sup>th</sup> on the Alegi Field/Pease Road playground property. The victim was a 33-year-old man from West Haven who had been shot multiple times. Our investigation is very active and progressing by our Detectives who are working closely in conjunction, and with the assistance of, Detectives from the Connecticut State Police Central District Major Crime unit. The victim was killed at the scene.
- **Burglaries:** There were no burglaries during the last two months.
- **Catalytic Converter Thefts:** Most recently here and throughout the state, there have been a lot of thefts of catalytic converters. We had some several weeks ago from businesses on Lunar Drive and last week on

two occasions, there were catalytic converters stolen from vehicles parked overnight at a service station in the business area.

- Larceny & Fraud Cases: We have several ongoing larceny/fraud cases resulting from Internet scams and checks being stolen, altered and fraudulently cashed.
- Stolen Motor Vehicles: We had one stolen vehicle from Beecher Road, which was since recovered in New Haven.
- In April, we had several larcenies from unlocked vehicles throughout town. A vehicle used in that matched the description of a car later used in an armed carjacking in New Haven, and on April 12 we had a carjacking by 3 males with a handgun at a service station on Rte. 69.
- In May, ISU was able to make arrests and clear up several pending cases including:
  - Suspects involved in the April carjacking.
  - Arrest of a suspect responsible for a burglary that occurred at the Subway restaurant in March.
  - Served an arrest warrant for the possession of a stolen firearm in connection with a motor vehicle accident that occurred on Rimmon Road in April.
  - Last month ISU also assumed several new cases.
  - During the last two months they also processed 25 requests for public fingerprinting services and initiated background investigations and processing of an additional 20 pistol permit applications.

***The Board voted unanimously (Fried/Desir) to accept the Activity Report.***

### **REPORT of the CHIEF of POLICE**

- Acquisition of Sign Messaging Trailer: Working with the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, we were able to acquire, at no cost, a solar powered electronic messaging sign for our region to be housed in town. It is a portable unit on a trailer, so it is easy to move. It is similar to signs you may see at highway construction sites, but on a smaller scale. We are storing it at the Public Works facility lot so that it is readily available for events in our town to get messages out to the public during town functions, special events or during an emergency. There are several of these units that have been distributed to different communities across the state and Chief Cappiello will coordinate sharing it with any other towns in our area that request to borrow it for special events in their communities.
- Dispatch Renovation – Authorize Expenditure: For some time now, we have been discussing the renovation of our Dispatch Room, which is the center of operations for the town, 24/365, and it is the first point of contact for anyone from the public or from other agencies coming to the Police Department. For many years now, no work involving any type of physical update has been done and as time has gone on, now it is to the point where it is deplorable and in dire need of an update. The soundproofing on the walls is falling off; the carpet is worn and stained; the radio console table and furniture are falling apart; and there has been a plastic trash bag covering the broken wall-mounted air conditioner for probably more than a decade. We have just completed a multi-million-dollar radio project and work continues to be done on town buildings all around us, but projects here at the Police Department continuously get pushed aside and placed on the back burner. As requested during our March 15, 2021 meeting, I have enclosed a project summary and rendering of the proposed renovations that we have been discussing for the past several years. Chief Cappiello said he has discussed it with the Finance Director and there is initial funding already put aside for the project and he is willing to research additional funding source options, but the next step in the process hinges on the Board's backing and willingness to move forward with the project. Chief Cappiello said he looks to the Board for support as these renovations are long overdue and would go miles to enhance the Dispatchers' job performance, and the overall operational functionality and efficiency of operations up there for years to come. Chairman Berke asked the Chief what is the proposed cost of the renovations? Chief Cappiello said the proposed cost is \$117,248. Chairman Berke said it is his understanding that these funds are, at least part if not all of them, could be from radio project funding that was previously approved by the town? Chief Cappiello said, yes there was \$22,000 put aside initially for some cosmetic repairs and the Finance Director said he could seek additional funding to cover the entire cost. Chairman Berke added that the wallpaper is hanging off the wall, it is somewhat of an embarrassment, it is a terrible working environment, and this is the face for most of the public, this is the face of our Police Department. We are invited back to the meeting room, but we walk past that room, obviously most of us have walked through and spent some time, it's just in horrible shape.

***The Board voted unanimously (Fried/Esposito) to approve the proposed Dispatch renovations.***

- **COVID-19 Public Meeting Update:** As of now, the Governor's Executive Order regarding virtual public meetings is due to expire on June 30. If it ***is renewed***, the First Selectman will ask that Boards/Commissions discuss among themselves whether they wish to meet in person or continue virtually. Those wishing to meet in person would be able to do so beginning July 1. If the Order ***is not renewed***, then all meetings will be held in person as of July 1, masks and social distancing will be required in rooms that allow for social distancing and proper ventilation. Town Hall will be forwarding additional guidance as we get closer to July 1. Our next Police Commission meeting is scheduled for July 19, so Chief Cappiello said he would keep the Board posted.
- Chairman Berke polled the Board members and it was ***unanimous*** that they ***do not*** want to meet in person if masks are still required.

***The Board voted unanimously (Desir/Fried) to accept the Report of the Chief of Police.***

**PERSONNEL MATTERS:**

- **Letters of Recognition:** Chief Cappiello reported that he recently issued Letters of Recognition to Officer Rodriguez-Perez, Officer Capozzo, Sgt. Cappiello and Det. Luzzi for their collective actions and efforts that lead to the arrest and conviction of a subject, who plead guilty recently in US Federal Court to the charge of Possession of a Firearm in Furtherance of a Drug Trafficking Crime. The incident stems from a motor vehicle accident on Rte. 69 near Landin Street, where the suspect fled the scene. Working together, these officers recovered a loaded handgun with an extended ammunition magazine, along with a quantity of crack cocaine, heroin and fentanyl that was all packaged for sale. Working further with the FBI and the New Haven Police Department, they were able to identify and arrest the suspect, who plead guilty and currently remains incarcerated pending his sentencing in September. Kudos to all of them for a job well done.
- **Extended Absence:** Chief Cappiello reported that we have a supervisor who is currently out of work this month on an extended absence due to a surgical procedure and he will be out for a week, followed by vacation, so we will be short staffed for most of June.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION / ACTION TAKEN, AS APPROPRIATE**

***The Board voted unanimously (Esposito/Fried) to move into Executive Session at 7:07 p.m. to conduct a discussion of Personnel Matters regarding the Deputy Chief's Position Hiring and a preliminary discussion regarding the potential creation of a supervisory position within the rank of Sergeant. (Liaisons and media were excused, all others invited to stay.)***

- The Board moved out of Executive Session at 7:34 p.m.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

- **Commissioner Stephen Falcigno addressed the Board:** As many of you have probably heard, this is going to be my last Police Commission meeting, so if the Board will indulge me for a moment, I would appreciate it. I want to tell you what an honor it has been to serve this Commission and the Town of Woodbridge as a Police Commissioner for twenty-one years. I personally believe that this Commission, after all of the commissions I have been collectively on, this group of Commissioners I think I will be the most disappointed and miss the most because I think we have a great group of people and we serve the Town well. It has been an honor for me to be part of the hiring process throughout my twenty-one years, through my positions on the Board as Vice Chair or on the hiring committee, and it has been a thrill for me to be part of the hiring process for many of the current members. On a personal note, I have to say that I have always attempted and tried, and hopefully was successful, at leaving party politics out of all of the decisions that I made on the Board. My goal was always to be fair and reasonable and make decisions that were in the best interest of the people of the Town and collectively for all the people that were members of the Police Department. Commissioner Falcigno recognized Administrative Assistant Janice Innocenzi, and he thanked Chief Frank Cappiello for being a great person, being steadfast, and has always being a gentleman. Commissioner Falcigno said he was

also happy that he was involved with the hiring of Assistant Chief Smith who he thinks will be very successful, very good for the Town, and a welcomed asset and a good person for Frank to bounce ideas off of. To the current Commission, I would like to thank the “Two Debbies”, as I call them; it has been a lot of fun getting to know you both, though we certainly have different ideas on the way the world should look, we’ve always had a lot of fun together, I’ve always respected your opinions, you have been very kind to me in many, many ways as you know on a personal level, and I just want to thank you both for that and I will miss you. Andy Esposito, as some of you may know, I have known him basically all my life and as people go through their lives they have people they really respect, my father was one and Andy Esposito is another. To the Chairman, I’m going to miss, and it was only because you had the ability to control the flow of the meeting, that you were able to throw a few digs here and there my way, and I always enjoyed them and I appreciated them. I wish I had an opportunity to throw them back going forward, but it just wasn’t in the cards. To the new Commissioner taking my place, I’m not sure who he is, I’m not sure I’ve ever met him, but if there’s anything I can do for him in the future, if he has any questions, if there’s anything I can do to help the Commission in any way, shape or form, it would really be my honor and I would feel an obligation to participate. Last but not least, I would like to thank all the officers at the Police Department, I want to thank them for their kindness and the respect they have shown me for the last 21 years. Hopefully, our paths will cross again, best of luck going forward and I wish everybody the best. Thank you.

- Commissioner Falcigno left the meeting at 7:41 p.m.

**ACTION TAKEN ON MATTERS DISCUSSED DURING EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

- Deputy Chief’s Position – Hiring:

*The Board voted unanimously (Fried/Esposito) to hire Ronald Smith as Deputy Chief of Police.*

**ADJOURNMENT:**

*The Board voted unanimously (Esposito/Desir) to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners at 7:42 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted:

Janice Innocenzi, Administrative Assistant

# WOODBIDGE TRAFFIC AUTHORITY

## REGULAR MEETING

### MOTIONS

June 21, 2021

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no motions made, no votes taken.

#### TRAFFIC MATTERS:

- JCC Request to Approve – “10<sup>th</sup> Annual Murray Lender 5K Bagel Run”:  
*The Board voted unanimously (Fried/Esposito) to approve the “10<sup>th</sup> Annual Murray Lender Bagel Run” road race.*
- Sperry Road – Request to Close Unimproved Section:  
*The Board voted unanimously (Fried/Desir) that they do not agree to close the unimproved section of Sperry Park.*
- Old Quarry Road/Nettleton Drive – Request for Additional “Stop” Signs:  
*The Board voted unanimously (Esposito/Fried) to deny the request for additional stop signs.*
- 110-125 Bradley Road – Request for “Curve” Signs:  
*The Board voted unanimously (Esposito/Fried) to install the curve signs.*
- Hidden Driveway – 2 Bethmour Road:  
*The Board voted unanimously (Fried/Esposito) to approve the installation of a “Hidden Driveway” sign at 2 Bethmour Road.*

#### ADJOURNMENT:

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- B.O.P.C. Special Meeting – May 4, 2021:

*The Board voted unanimously (Fried/Esposito) to approve the minutes from the Special Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Police Commissioners/Woodbridge Traffic Authority held on May 4, 2021.*

#### REVIEW of REPORTS

- Financial Report:

*The Board voted unanimously (Fried/Falcigno) to accept the Financial Report.*

- Activity Report:

*The Board voted unanimously (Fried/Desir) to accept the Activity Report.*

#### REPORT of the CHIEF of POLICE

- Dispatch Renovation – Authorize Expenditure:

*The Board voted unanimously (Fried/Esposito) to approve the proposed Dispatch renovations.*

- COVID-19 Public Meeting Update:

Chairman Berke polled the Board members and it was *unanimous* that they *do not* want to meet in person if masks are still required after July 1.

*The Board voted unanimously (Desir/Fried) to accept the Report of the Chief of Police.*

#### PERSONNEL MATTERS

- There were no motions made, no votes taken.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION / ACTION TAKEN, AS APPROPRIATE

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